

## **Historic, archived document**

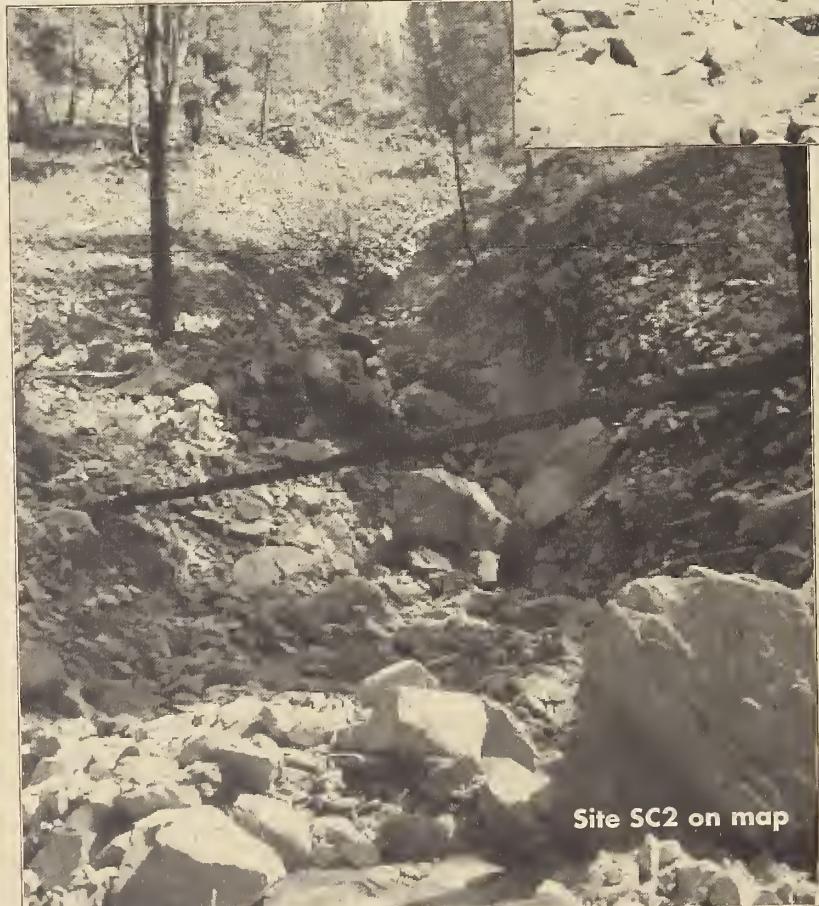
Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

There were over 3,500 comments submitted for the Burned Area Recovery Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This is 3,475 more comments than the Forest has ever received for any National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) document it has written.

## BURNED AREA RECOVERY

When the rains in areas throughout the valley were intense, it was especially significant where the fire in areas such as the Laird Child Creek drainage. These aerial photographs were taken during flights to identify all damage from the intense rains.

Mudslides created alluvial fans like the one pictured above right of the Skalkaho Creek drainage. Other alluvial fans were also found that washed into Sleeping Child Creek, several miles away from any development, roads or past logging activity. Biologists from Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of Environmental Quality, and the Forest Service are monitoring the impacts the sedimentation is having on channels, fish and other aquatic life.



Site SC2 on map

## FLASH FLOODING

alluvial fan in Skalkaho drainage

: blowdown in Sleeping Creek drainage



Left: map showing sites where slides occurred in the Sleeping Child Creek drainage

Site SC9 on map



Above: the largest alluvial fan found along the Sleeping Child Creek drainage. It created a large pool of water approximately 300 feet long by 50 feet wide with a depth of about 2 feet. The pool appears to be easily reached from either direction of the creek.

Left: debris flowed from this natural gully and created the fan of material. It moved Sleeping Child Creek 50 feet to the south and buried the existing trail with small boulders, rocks and soil.

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



### Feb 2001

Release proposal for review and comment  
Study comments, writing DEIS (30 days)

### May 2001

Release DEIS for public review and comment (45 days)  
Continue study, public comment period and edit DEIS

### Sept 2001

Release final EIS  
Begin work on accepted management decisions

**Burned Area Recovery  
Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement  
Timeline:**

## DID BURNED AREA EMERGENCY REHABILITATION (BAER) EFFORTS MITIGATE FLOOD IMPACTS?

Straw wattles, contour log felling and hydromulching native grass seed proved to help mitigate the destructive impacts of the floods. These photos taken of the hillsides on the south side of Laird Creek on July 25, show how the BAER efforts did help. Though there was some channelling and mudslides, a lot of the burned hillsides held up.

Unfortunately, it couldn't prevent nearby homes and buildings from flood damage.

*Below: flooding at the Rocky Knob Cafe below Laird Creek*



*Left: hillside on the south side of Laird Creek Road seeded through hydromulching techniques*



*Below: straw wattles and contour felled logs on the same south side of Laird Creek Road*

## UPSIZING CULVERTS. SUCCESS OR NOT?



This was one of many culverts that was replaced last fall. It is located on Forest Service Road 106-A, 3 miles south of Sula, MT, east of US Highway 93. The old culvert, 18 inches in diameter, was replaced with a four foot diameter culvert. The picture (right) shows mud and debris that washed out part of the road. The mud and debris continued down the hillside (left) and created damage to two homes at the bottom near Camp Creek. Though there was some road damage, the culvert held up and kept the road from completely washing out.



## HEAVY FUELS CAN LEAD TO MULTIPLE IMPACTS



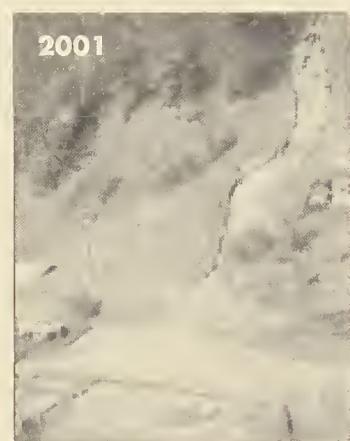
### The Jake Wetzstein Homestead

1895: this is what a ponderosa pine forest looked like before fire suppression practices allowed other tree species to flourish and create a densely forested area.

1980: this is the same site 85 years later. With the absence of fire, the forested area behind the homestead became very dense. It changed from a fire dependent and resistant ponderosa pine forest to a mixed conifer forest dominated by Douglas fir.



2000: The densely forested area behind the homestead provided enough fuels to maintain the high intensity burn that passed over the area. Fortunately, the home seen in the previous pictures had been moved some years prior to the fire.



2001: Heavy rains on July 21 and 22 caused a mudslide that travelled down the draw and crossed the East Fork Road.

## THE SULA PEAK LOOKOUT

150

100

50

2000

2001



Last year by July 31, there were 176 fires reported on the Bitterroot National Forest. 150 were caused by lightning, 25 were person caused, and one the cause was unknown.

This year by July 31, there were 40 fires reported on the Bitterroot National Forest. 30 were caused by lightning, 9 were person caused, and one the cause was unknown.

From last year, lightning caused fires was down by 80%, person caused fires was down by 64%, and no difference in the cause unknown category. Overall, the total number of fires since last year was down by 36%.



*Work on the Sula Peak Lookout is moving right along. By the end of July, the contractor was setting the roofing support beams in place.*

*The Lookout should be completed by the end of September*

# SHARED VIEWS

*News and Information for the Communities of the Bitterroot National Forest*



Bitterroot National Forest  
1801 N. First Street  
Hamilton, MT 59840

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## Did You Know That...

Of the nine National Forests in Montana issuing commercial and personal-use mushroom permits during the month of June, the Bitterroot National Forest was significantly the leader.

The Forest issued 1,466 personal-use permits and 997 commercial-use permits.

The Kootenai National Forest out of Libby, MT was second to the Bitterroot for issuing commercial-use permits with a total of 437.

The Helena National Forest out of Helena, MT was second to the Bitterroot for issuing personal-use permits with a total of 325.

## NOXIOUS WEEDS AND YOU

The noxious weed on the front cover is the Dalmatian Toadflax. It is part of the snapdragon flower family making it easy to identify. Though it's not the most dominant noxious weed in the valley, it has the potential to be the most devastating due to its root system. Roots on the Dalmatian Toadflax can grow as deep as six feet down, with lateral roots extending 10 feet or more.

This non-palatable plant can also be poisonous to cattle if large amounts are ingested. However, cattle usually avoid this weed.

Dalmatian toadflax, spotted knapweed, and sulfur cinquefoil are the three species of noxious weeds of most concern in the Bitterroot Valley. Each species can overtake and displace existing plant communities creating a loss

of forage for big game species and grazing cattle. All three species grow well in dry climates and well-drained, relatively coarse-textured soils. However, they're very adaptable and can do well in other types of soils.

These noxious weeds spread mostly by seed but can also spread by their root systems. Spotted knapweed in an area of a square meter can produce anywhere from 5,000 to 40,000 seeds. A single Dalmatian toadflax plant can produce as much as 500,000 seeds over a three-month period during the summer.

As with all weeds, these tend to grow in areas where the ground has been disturbed. The burned areas on the forest are the most susceptible sites for weed infestation. This is why it is important for us to develop a management plan

to effectively treat burned areas on the forest against noxious weeds.

A Weed Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be coming out soon giving you an opportunity to learn more about the possible alternatives in treating burned lands to combat noxious weeds. When it is released you will have an opportunity to express your concerns and suggestions for the best possible management methods during a 45-day comment period. Weed treatment is one of the five major concerns and priorities identified by members of the communities in the Bitterroot Valley last fall. It's important that you continue to be involved in the management decisions of your public lands.

